DEWAN: That is a question of fact in which you are at direct variance with the information before me. I will have that matter looked into.

Then you come to the lands in the Todupuzha taluk which the committee working in Muvattupuzha very kindly recommended to be registered. What the committee working at Muvattupuzha has to do with the lands in Todupuzha passes my comprehension. Therefore, you have to excuse the Government if they do not find their way to fall in with the views of the Muvattupuzha gentlemen. The matter has to be further investigated.

You come next to the disafforestation of Survey Nos. 1463/1 and 1471/1 in Reserve No. 23 of the Neriamangalam Range and the lands in Survey Nos. 1459/1 and 1478/1 lying west of the pathway from Neduvakad to Arattukadavu. Portions of Survey Nos. 1459/1 and 1478/1 have already been disafforested. Then Survey Nos. 1463/1 and 1471/1 are large areas belonging to some of the best Todupuzha forests and they cannot be disafforested without serious detriment to the working of the department.

MEMBER: The sites are bounded on all sides by registered lands.

DEWAN: You say it is bounded on all sides ?

MEMBER: Yes.

DEWAN: I will have that matter examined. They form an integral part of the forest reserves and are so very necessary for the forests to be maintained at all, that I can hold out very little hopes of acceding to your representation in that matter. In regard to many of the lands, orders have been passed and those in respect of which orders have not been passed, will be re-examined and I shall see if there is any possibility for more disafforestation.

18. Administration of the Excise Department.

MR. MAHOMED HANEEF (*Member, Municipal Council, Kuzhittura*) represented that the Government were not adequately encouraging the manufacture of local salt. If sufficient encouragement had been given and the salt factories maintained in a satisfactory condition, all the salt required for local consumption could be produced locally. Although the area under salt cultivation had increased from 305 acres in 1092 to 482 acres in 1100, the output per acre had fallen from 1,975 maunds in 1092 to 1,168 maunds in 1100.

One of the reasons for the decrease was the absence of a scientific expert to give advice on salt cultivation. In 1093, the Government, with a view to deal satisfactorily with the question of salt manufacture, ordered the joint inspection of the salt factories in South Travancore by the Chief Engineer and the Excise Commissioner. But instead of removing the obstacles to the manufacture of salt then pointed out, the Government, in 1094, assigned an additional area of 104 acres from the Manakudi lake for salt cultivation. Further additions to the area under salt cultivation were made later, but no measures were adopted to ensure either the supply of good brine or the prevention of flood water in *alloms*.

A second reason for the decrease was that local salt licensees were not given sufficient encouragement in the production of salt. The salt produced in the factories was not taken delivery of after due weighment, at the proper time and on prompt payment of *kudivaram*. Although, in reply to a representation made on the subject at the eighteenth session of the Assembly, it was stated that a decision would soon be reached in the matter of storage and weighment of salt, no decision had yet been made. Under the agreements made with the salt licensees, the Government were bound to accept delivery of salt stored by the licensees before the 30th Medam every year after payment of *kudivaram*. But that was never done in practice. If the salt already stored was not promptly taken delivery of, there would be difficulty in storing further quantities for want of space. When the matter was brought to the notice of the Government at the eighteenth session of the Assembly by Mr. Subrahmanya Karayalar, he was told that fresh salt should be heaped up for a period of 9 or 10 months before it could be used for human consumption. But in reply to an interpellation regarding the period of dryage of salt, the Government stated that there was no such fixed period, but that the salt should be completely dry before it

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could be taken delivery of and sold. Rules had also been passed to the effect that salt should be taken delivery of only just before sale or export by the department. The rules held out a premium to the subordinates of the Excise Department resorting to corrupt practices and were a source of hardship to the licensees.

Another reason was the importation of large quantities of foreign salt every year. A good portion of the imported salt was being left as surplus at the end of each year. It was not known why large quantities of foreign salt, much more than what was required to meet the local demand, should be imported and kept in stock at the end of every year.

The chief causes, adduced by the Excise Commissioner, for the diminution in the quantity of local salt were (i) the reduction in the quantity of good brine ; (ii) the influx of fresh water in salt pans ; and (iii) want of unity among the salt cultivators in carrying out public works in salt factories. The first resulted from neglect on the part of the Government of the proper maintenance of *alloms*. Foremost among the *alloms* in South Travancore were those in Tamaracolam. Scarcity of good brine in those *alloms* was brought about by not providing outlets for the drainage of fresh water and by the reduction in the area of the Manakudi lake as a result of assigning portions thereof for salt cultivation. None of the works suggested by the Excise Commissioner and the Chief Engineer in their joint report had been carried out. If the opinion of the Chief Engineer had been obtained before assigning portions of the Manakudi lake, the evils pointed out would not have arisen. The assignment of portions of the Manakudi lake prevented the free flow of water along the Pazhayar and thereby led to breaches in *alloms* and caused loss to the salt licensees. As regards want of unity among salt licensees in the matter of carrying out public works in *alloms* at the proper time, the member said that, according to the modified Excise System, the Government could carry out such works in the first instance and recover the cost from the licensees. That was never done. The Puttallom was an instance in point. The chief cause for want of unity among the licensees of the *allom* was that a portion of the Manakudi lake situated on the south-western portion of the *allom* was assigned to Mr. T. V. Krishna Aiyar for salt cultivation. According to the agreement entered into by him with the Government, he should have opened a channel, 100 links in width, for draining the Palkulam surplus and a portion of the water in the Tengumputtur *Odai*. But the agreement was never fulfilled. Further, the old *kal* leading to the Manakudi lake was closed and a small *kal* constructed instead. As a result, the free flow of water was prevented and floods caused during the rainy season. Such actions on the part of Mr. Krishna Aiyar and the silence of the Government in the matter in spite of repeated memorials had discouraged the salt licensees and consequently led to a fall in the quantity of salt manufactured year after year.

In view to suggest measures for remedying the defects pointed out and develop salt manufacture in the State, the member requested that a committee with a non-official majority might be appointed.

He next spoke about temperance. It was gratifying to note that the Government had adopted the policy of temperance and as a first step increased the price of liquor and reduced the number of liquor shops. The attitude of the subordinates of the Excise Department was not, however, in strict conformity with the declared policy of the Government. In view to win the approbation of the superior officers, they concentrated their attention to selling shops to the best advantage of the Government and collecting the dues from shop contractors at the proper times. That could be done only if they moved amicably with the contractors. The officers were thus prevented from concentrating their attention on the more important part of their work *viz.*, prevention of illicit sale of liquor and the checking of the vagaries of shop contractors. The member suggested that, as a remedy, the collection work and the auction sale of shops should be entrusted to the Land Revenue Department and the preventive work alone entrusted to the Excise Department. The suggestion had the support of many excise experts and had been adopted in British India, Mysore and Cochin. The local Excise Commissioner had also supported the idea on a particular occasion.

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DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Haneef, you seem to be labouring under the impression that absolutely nothing is being done to encourage the manufacture of salt. As a matter of fact, that is not the case. Every effort is being made to enable manufacturers to produce salt in larger quantities and of better quality. There is, as you remarked, the anomalous difference between the old *alloms* and the newer ones. That is now being attempted to be removed and they will rapidly pass through the transitional stage; and as the first instalment, the Tamaracolam old *allom* is about to be brought into the category of the new ones.

In regard to the weighment of salt, that is also a matter which has been brought up before this Assembly more than once and we have at last reached a stage when the Excise Commissioner is drawing up a set of rules which, if found workable, will be applied so as to improve matters and make things easier for the salt manufacturer and for the Government.

In the matter of Excise, I see you have taken in what I said yesterday and I cannot do more than repeat that it will always be the policy of the Government to keep a firm hand upon the consumption of drinks and drugs in the State; not merely to keep a firm hand but to drive it also with strong reins so that you may not be afraid of the country taking to or running away into intemperance or anything of that sort. We will steadily effect control and bring it to moderate dimensions. I will not say that these habits of intemperance exist in immoderate proportions because they do not. But there is no reason why we should not, even if they exist in moderate proportions, try to bring them down to lesser proportions. With that I ask you to remain content at present.

19. Amendment of the Jenmi and Kudiyan Regulation.

MR. K. P. VELAYUDHAN PILLAI (*Member, Municipal Council, Vaikam*) said that the necessity for the amendment of the existing Jenmi and Kudiyan Regulation had been urged upon the Government both by the *jenmies* and the *kudiyans*. The Regulation was defective in that it placed the *jenmies* in a position of vantage and subjected the *kudiyans* to many hardships. It, therefore, required immediate and radical changes so as to safeguard the best interests of the *jenmies* and *kudiyans* alike.

The first amendment necessary was in regard to the payment of renewal fees. The fees should never exceed 25 per cent. of the *kanam* amount or twice the amount of *michavaram*. Besides the rack-rents exacted from the *kudiyans*, they were also called upon to pay several *avakasams*, such as *opputusi* and the like. After making all such payments, the profits made by the *kudiyan* were too small to meet his ordinary requirements. The renewal fees should be levied only once in 24 years and recovered in annual instalments to prevent accumulation of arrears. The member said that, in the Vaikam taluk, the *adukkuvatu* and *panachilavu* which were payable in kind, should be commuted into money, one *para* of paddy being made equivalent to one *puthen*.

The next suggestion was that the *jenmipaattam* should be fixed on the basis of the net produce of the land concerned.

He then referred to the power of eviction conferred on the *jenmies* by Section 7 of the Regulation, for default of payment of rent for 12 years. Such power was not only a violent encroachment on the rights of the *kudiyans*, but was unnecessary in view of the fact that rent was expressly declared to be a first charge on the land under Section 13. The latter provision was sufficient to safeguard the interests of the *jenmies* in the collection of rent. Even in respect of *pandaravaka* lands, no such power of eviction had been reserved and its absence had not stood in the way of collection of revenue. Further, there was no similar provision either in the Madras Estates Land Act or in the Bengal Tenancy Act.

Passing on to the modes of collection and payment of dues, the member pressed for the enhancement of the jurisdiction of Munsiffs and District Judges in entertaining suits for recovery of arrears. Under the Regulation, Munsiffs could dispose of claims not exceeding Rs. 30, and District Judges those not exceeding Rs. 100. Munsiffs could well be empowered to try suits relating to claims for Rs. 100

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